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A LESSON FROM OFF THE STAGE.

I PRESUME that we are all of one mind as to the tremendous perversity of human nature—that we are all content to be included in a wide-sweeping imputation of frailty in that respect, without pretence of setting up a schedule of exemptions in favour of ourselves or any one else. I say, I presume this; but then I know the economy of my own mind tends to the open and confiding, the candid, and perhaps self-criminating. I assure the reader that I am the veriest creature of impulse that ever shamed; and on reflection, I may be unwittingly compromising others, by making general a damaging admission which should of right be simply individual and particular; so I will speak only of the perversity of my own human nature. There is some good policy in the shewing up of one's own weaknesses, of being at once both the moral teacher and the frightful example. I think the preacher who says frankly: 'Dear friends, we are all miserable sinners,' and hints by pulpit pantomime, with the aid of white cambric, that he himself is no better than anybody else—if anything, perhaps, rather worse—is more popular and followed than the orator who shakes a clenched fist at his congregation, and screaming: 'O you vipers, you will all be so-and-so'd,' seems to imply by his wrath and confidence that a better fate by a good deal is reserved for himself. The modern wizard finds it his best plan to commence his entertainment with the bland, perhaps superfluous assurance, that after all 'he's really no conjuror;' that half his tricks are purely natural magic, and the rest simply sleight-of-hand. The old 'Hey, Presto' times have passed away, cabalistic signs only remain on chemists' bottles, and the stale appendages of the necromancer—the wand, the extinguisher-cap, the circle on the floor, the caldron, the black cat, and the stuffed alligator—hairlooms of the black art—are now utterly worthless properties, such as even Zadkiel himself would not bid for, if Dr Dee's personal effects were brought to the hammer to-morrow. Perfect confidence is the order of the day—no concealments; ladies and gentlemen, there is no deception; and though on certain other platforms, performers may be found executing elaborate fantasias on those favourite instruments, their own trumpets, the gentleman at this booth avows his weaknesses, concedes that he is naturally perverse, merely mortal, and not perhaps a very good specimen even of that inferior class of goods.

It is altogether wrong, no doubt, that I should be one day anxious to perform, all of my own accord, offices such as I should at another time strenuously

shrink from even upon the most urgent solicitation. Of the many parts that a man plays in his time, why have I so frequently selected as my 'favourite character,' as Mr Skelt used to say on his theatrical portraits, the rôle of Timon? Yet I have on many occasions shut myself up in the solitude of my chambers, and played a sort of *misanthropos* to more than my heart's content, in spite of my stoutness and certain facial disadvantages for the character. I have had serious attacks of the cynical; and my 'bitter mood,' as they call it on the stage, has been often very strongly upon me. There is a good lady—in one of the tall new houses, No. 905 Tarlatan Square, Kensington, and near the Boilers—well, I admit she is no longer the bright young thing I once knew her, when our voices blended in the exquisite duet of *Paul and Virginia*, and she was so delighted at my fine rendering, in the manner of Mr Braham, of the tenor bravura, *Gallop on Gaily*. We have given up our music, both of us, long since; and she wears a jewel on her forehead, which is suspicious; and I—but no matter. Well, I say, she is kind enough to remember old times, and to shower upon me, by aid of the postman, ambrosial pink notes, full of entreaty for my company, at dinner, at a *thé dansante*, at a *soirée musicale*, or at an evening-party, with 'dancing' printed in a corner of the note. And this, too, is all real kindness. Certainly, at dinner I have my one or two good stories: they have never been known to flag when I tell them—however they may fail in the hands of certain plagiarists I wot of—and so I may be regarded as in a measure giving valid consideration for my meal. But as for dancing, I am now past that accomplishment. I may say, *en passant*, however, that the dancing of my time was a different thing to what it is to-day. We possessed grace, and attitude, and action; *we did steps*; there was none of the dummy dawdling about I see in modern *salons*. But now I dance no more; and am nothing but an incumbrance, an obstruction, a nuisance in a ball-room, like an advertising van in Chancery Lane; and I block up gangways, and tread on toes, and have mine trod on, and stand in draughts till I shiver with cold; and I lurk about refreshment-rooms till I think that Gunter's men know every button of my waistcoat, and I grow ashamed, and long to have my white cravat off—they call it 'choker' now, I regret to say!—and to be in bed. So, when the invitations came in from Tarlatan Square, I have refused them, and neglected the lady of the house. I have treated 'old times' accordingly; I have pondered too much upon what she is now, too little upon what she was then—ah, how long ago!—and when kind effusions were added to the formal notes of

request, I have not heeded, but have crept still further into my tub, and railed at the Tarlatan Square parties, and laughed to scorn the ball-room, and lampooned society, and forgetting the dear gone days of *Paul and Virginia*, and *Gallop on Gaily*, have fallen so low as to tattle jestingly and irreverently of her, and the jewel on her forehead. How could I do that, and look in the glass again, with my own age what it is, and the man coming round with the census papers very shortly?

I have done all this; I have taken pains thus to be unsocial, and solitary, and misanthropical, and yet, O perversity! I have sometimes stood on the pavement in west-end streets, and looking up at illumined first-floor windows, listened to Mr Weippert's gay strains oozing out of the hot ball-room into the fresh night-air, and watched through the gauze curtains lithe and graceful figures winding and twining round and round in the intricacies of the dance, and seen now and then the exquisite episode of two young people coming out to cool in the balcony, and to flirt and sentimentalise, and tease and love. I have beheld all this, and witched yet once again by the lights and the music, the flowers and the dresses, the glorious eyes and the wonderful tresses, I—erst Timon, or Mr Haller, or Mr Manfred, or what you will—I have even longed to join the party, to mingle in the dance once more, and be of and with the dancers; albeit the same day, perchance I had flung in the waste-basket an 'at home' from Tarlatan Square!

It is a very sultry evening, and much perspiration about and great wiping of faces, and loosening of waistcoats and neck-ties, and the world walking very slowly and carefully, for fear of getting hotter, and everything advertised as 'iced' in public-house windows. The cynic finds his tub uncomfortably close, wanting in ventilation, altogether ill adapted for warm weather, and he walks abroad, to stand at street-corners, saunter in squares, to gasp for breath, like a gold-fish performing absurd circuits in a glass globe, and to pray for air. He finds himself in the Strand, almost inclined to envy the little acrobats who do the 'wheel' alongside omnibuses, their simple costume of ragged shirt and ventilated nethers, the two garments linked frailly by a half-yard of string over one shoulder. The attire is not cleanly, or becoming, but it is cool. And now I—for I am the cynic—am close in the neighbourhood of the Theatre-royal Lion. Who does not know it? and further on, its antagonist, the Theatre-royal Unicorn; and who has not heard of the deadly feud existing between the rival managers? It is certainly not a night for the theatre. It is still light; the sun has not long been down; and if the gray dusk of evening is so insufferably sultry, what will be the atmosphere of the always hot Lion, with its red paint, and gas glare, and abortive ventilation? And yet, inconsequential being that I am, I positively enter the theatre. Five minutes before, I should have taken any proposition to visit the Theatre-royal Lion in such weather as an insult. No amount of money would have tempted me; had tickets for the best portion of the house been proffered me, I should have torn them to atoms incontinently; and yet, I enter, and pay my money, and sit down humbly in the pit.

How I am moved to this, I am unable to explain, beyond the statement I have already given, that I am naturally perverse—certainly, I am tempted by no enticing entries in the programme. There is no allurements of novelty for me. It is a hot-weather bill. The house is open at a loss, and the entertainment offered is one that strains the least upon the treasury. The theatre is very empty, of course, and regiments of benches are at my service. The play has commenced; my entrance sounds quite noisily in the quiet of the house, and my footsteps wake loud echoes in all parts of the vacant edifice; the voices of the players, too,

vibrate sharply and harshly, and the bill-woman seems to proffer her merchandise with quite an angry jarring clamour. I am ashamed of the disturbance I create, and I sink into a near pit-seat. When the audience—the very small audience—who had frowned on my entrance, resenting it as an intrusion upon their quiet and privacy, become a little accustomed to my presence, and, their first bad impression of me wearing off, incline to admit me as of their small but faithful band, I venture to look round; first up above at the gallery; but from my position, I can only see two projecting arms, partly concealed by shirt-sleeves, and the hands appertaining to the arms hanging down listlessly and languidly. There is no evidence of any other soul in that portion of the theatre.—I next remark the upper boxes; here a few people are gathered, with large gaps between them. They sit in twos, and are 'orders.' This is painfully palpable; it could hardly be more so if they had borne the scraps of paper which admitted them pasted on their foreheads. They join to the lassitude of the weather the abject lethargy and cruel indifference with which 'orders' always witness a performance. If I were an actor, I should dread the 'orders' more than any other members of the audience. They never applaud, they are never pleased; they sit aloft sniggering feebly, or staring at the chandelier, or loff over, gnawing the brass railings, as soldiers suffering under the cat bite bullets, by way of occupation. There is the usual sallow young man, with the cruel smile and the dirty shirt-collars, who will bite his nails so; I shiver in the pit, and not from cold, as I watch him in the boxes perform that painful operation. There is the eternal, hot, cross, hard-featured, fat woman, his inseparable companion. What can be the tie uniting those two? She is too old for his wife or his sweetheart, too young for his mother or his aunt, too unlike him to be any near member of his family; yet she always shares his orders. They sit speechless and glum, glowering down as though the others of the audience had done them some inexpiable wrong. Throughout the entire evening, they retain their places in the upper boxes; and then, more sullen and savage, if possible, than on their entry, they drag themselves out, and plunging into the streets, wend their way whither no one knows.

There is the thin woman, with the pallid face and eyes, with so very wide and ragged a parting, and such a very little wisp of dull gray hair, stabbed by a long-pronged fork-like comb at the back, and the globular forehead and the scarlet shawl, which so dreadfully exaggerates her want of colour, and forces upon you her plainness. There are the two young gentlemen whose thoughts are absorbed by the bows of their neck-ribbons, and whose ears are so crimson from violent brushing of their hair. Why, by the way, will youth persist in brushing his hair so ceaselessly, so relentlessly? I am sure the bald heads of maturity, of which so many are about, result from these savage attacks upon the hair in early life. Over all these, and appearing at all sorts of places with keys in his hand, as though he were a jailer or a wild-beast keeper, scowls a round-shouldered man, with a Jewish nose and shaggy eyebrows, who is the box-opener; always at war *à l'outrance* with the portion of the audience under his charge, for 'orders' are notoriously shabby in regard to fees, and never want a bill of the performance, or to leave their bonnets.

In the dress-circle there is a stout gentleman in a black wig and a white waistcoat, who looks hot, and tight, and swollen, and intensely uncomfortable, while his features quite shimmer from the moisture induced by heat on their surface. He is evidently only kept alive by his turning that gibus hat of his into a fan. What possible excuse could this man have for coming to the theatre on such a night? Enjoying himself?

He is suffering acutely. Only the fat know how the fat suffer in the dog-days. In the neighbourhood of this unhappy creature, a lady and gentleman are sitting, both most elaborately dressed. They have come, I should fancy, upon some mistaken impression about the Theatre-royal Lion, in regard to its pretensions as a fashionable resort, or booked their places long before the warm weather set in, and the audience had fled from the house. There are people who *will* dress magnificently upon very slight provocation, and it is manifest that these are of that description. The lady is tall, thin, and pale, with protracted neck and limited shoulders; her chin not prominent, but her nose compensating amply for that shortcoming; its tip has a roseate tendency, and her whole expression is remarkable for its settled acidity. A garland of many flowers twines round her head, and falls down her back, and crawls about her thin neck, and appears in divers places in strange and unexpected sprouts and twigs. She wears a dress of pink gauze, with lace trimmings, and those trimmed again with pink bows, which indeed appear to have settled about different parts of her dress like a new sort of moth. Massive gold bracelets, and necklace and chains, creek and twist, and serpentine about her; and she wears, of course—the ordinary size of the chest-plaster in the chemists' windows—the inevitable cameo-brooch, without which no English woman's dress appears to be complete. The amplitude of her dress has nearly covered the little man at her side, but from amid its waves his head peers out, like one just escaping from drowning—a mild, cowed, long-suffering, little man, evidently amiable but weak, and wanting in self-assertion. They are both intensely miserable. I know it has been a wretched business with both of them this coming to the theatre; that they had a hurried, snapping dinner in consequence, and that the lady grew very cross indeed over her toilet, and scolded her maid, and was not satisfied about her appearance, and did, and undid, and did over again many portions of her attire; that they worried each other about being late, and not being dressed in time, and as to whose fault it was if they arrived at the theatre after the curtain had risen; that many times the little man wished in his own heart the Theatre-royal Lion at the bottom of the sea, ere he had bought the tickets of admission in fulfilment of a promise made long ago; that they quarrelled seriously—that is, so far as the mild little man could quarrel seriously—in the cab as they came along when he trod on her foot, or tore her dress accidentally, while she declared it was done on purpose, and he said: 'But, my dear Louisa'—, and she burst in with: 'There, Edward; don't contradict, don't aggravate me, with my nerves in such a weak state, as you know, and ought to be ashamed,' &c. I will not dwell upon the few other visitors in the dress-boxes, except to notice that there is a blind man and his leader; the latter fast asleep, and the former with his poor, blank, dead orbs turned up toward the ceiling, and an expression of acute listening on his face that is almost painful.

Respecting the pit audience, I must be brief also. There is one man, rather like a cab-driver, with a red face in a green wide-awake, who crunches an apple audibly. There is a man reading a newspaper; and by the by, who is the man who perpetually reads newspapers at the theatre? There is a thin, flaccid young gentleman, with dry light hair, and a large mouth, who yawns at short intervals in a manner that is positively agonising. I feel sure that accident, rather than relief, must result from such dreadful efforts. There are the two stout country visitors who have come to the Lion quite conventionally, as part of the programme of an agriculturist's proceedings in town. They are both asleep, leaning against each other, with their heads very close, in quite a bovine

fashion, and snoring almost harmoniously. There is a private of the Scots Fusilier Guards tapping his nose with the curved end of a half-penny cane; and there is a policeman in the background, off duty, eating dexterously, with the aid of a hair-pin, fragrant periwinkles, wrapped in a handkerchief, which is lodged in his hat on the seat before him. This seems to be all of the pit: a very quiet audience, laughing very little, and with just a little rustle about it now and then that may be applause, or may be general nose-blowing.

Presently there is whispering behind me. Two young women have taken their places on the next bench to mine. Their dress perhaps evidences a slight struggle for supremacy between the smart and the shabby. Their bonnets—one slightly crumpled—and their light gloves are cloudy about the extremities and across the knuckles. One of them is decidedly plain—dark, large-featured, coarse, though good-natured looking; she is the taller. The other is *petite*, pallid, freckled, with fair hair, green-gray eyes, and long black eye-lashes. She is almost pretty, in spite of her unbecoming, sickly-green silk bonnet. They whisper together a good deal, and laugh, and nudge each other. Evidently, they are intimate friends; and soon it becomes clear to me that these are the only members of the audience who are really enjoying the entertainments of the evening. They are, with all their chattering together, much interested in the transactions on the stage; and it is wonderful what an acquaintance they have with all the details of the performance. The plain one is called Lotty; the other is addressed playfully and tenderly as Pets. I acquire information entirely new to me from the conversation of these young persons. They seem to me competent to write a secret history of the Theatre-royal Lion and its company. Pets is speaking.

'Oh, I know it's true—I'm sure it is, because Mrs Higgs told me; and of course *she'd* know.'

'Of course,' adds Lotty.

'And he's an awful temper when he's roused' (and by her looks I find she is alluding to a stout gentleman playing low comedy in a red wig, a smashed white hat with a black band, plaid-trousers, and a thick umbrella); 'and they say he beat his first wife, which I don't know, but perhaps it's true, and it isn't so much wonder, because she drank. But he said *he'd* have his full salary, whoever went on half, and he wasn't going to play for nothing, whoever was, when he'd got a good engagement at Hull he could always fall back on. And the Trombone heard him, and he told the First Violin; and of course, as he's engaged to Wheeler—the walking-lady, as you know—the whole thing came out; and then, says Smythers, How's the thing to be kept going on, if all won't agree and do the thing with good feeling, and that, but all want to take the lion's share? Why, of course, he says the shutters must go up directly, if that's the case; and there's an end of the thing.'

'I say,' Lotty interrupts, 'Wheeler looked here just now. She saw us, and winked; I declare she did.'

'And then,' says he (and I find she is still alluding to the low comedian), 'why not produce novelty? And he's got a lot of farces of his own, which he wants brought out, and to be paid for; which isn't right, of course it isn't; and says Smythers, Why should you be paid for your farces out of our pockets? which is true enough, you know.'

'There—did you see? She winked again.'

'She's got her muslin-de-laine on, do you observe, new trimmed with blue braid? It's a little too short for her. I suppose it shrunk in the washing; but it looks better than the old lilac silk she used to wear. Do you like her with her hair done like that? I don't think it becomes her dragged off her face. She's too thin for it, isn't she, dear? O my, isn't that a pretty scene?'

'Sweetly pretty. They had it new for that play of the *Brigand's Step-mother*. Don't you remember? It only ran a week.'

'Oh, I say, Lotty, isn't this fun, and doesn't he do it well? He undoes the umbrella, and all the cold pancakes tumble out all over the stage. Oh look!—here's Brooks. How that girl does turn her toes in!'

'Horrid, my dear! Fancy giving her three shillings a week extra after she had those few lines to speak in the burlesque. A regular shame, I call it.'

'And she didn't give them out well, either.'

'No, that she didn't; and she's so awkward with her hands, and they're so red, and she never knows where to put them. Oh, I say, isn't Old Brooks a funny old man—quite a *cure* I call him.'

'Yes, he keeps a sweet-shop in the Bagnigge Wells Road. They do say he's worth ever such a lot of money.'

'Then why does Mrs Brooks go out chairing?'

'She doesn't.'

'She does—I'm sure she does; Mrs Higgs said she did. I say, do you believe Brooks will ever marry the French horn?'

'No, that I don't. Young Collis isn't quite such a fool as that, I should think.'

'Oh, Jemima Ragg has gone to the Unicorn. She's engaged for the season.'

'No! Is she, indeed! What luck! and with her ankles. Ah! there's the end of the act. It's a pretty piece; isn't it?'

'I think, Pets, I shall have this silk turned; it's getting very dirty.'

'Oh, I wouldn't, dear, yet. It looks very nice, and I'm sure it would wear a good bit without turning. Rub it up with a little gin; I would: it's wonderful how glossy it makes a dress look. I wish the next act would begin. Have a cherry, Lotty?'

And so on. The young ladies prattled artlessly enough, and laughed at the comedy, and cried at the tragedy, and admired the acting and the scenery, and yet found time to discuss Fanny Wheeler's new-braided dress, and Miss Brooks's feet, and the good-fortune of Jemima Ragg, and the state of the treasury of the Theatre-royal Lion, and the prospects generally of the company. Talk about theatrical information! Why, Lotty and Pets knew everything: how much Miss Cricket gave for the bronze-boots she danced her famous shuffle hornpipe in, and where she bought them; the dreadful quarrel between Chalks the walking-gentleman, and Mrs C., who was playing an engagement as leading-woman at the Theatre-royal, Clerkenwell, and what that most unhappy difference arose from; why Mrs Buskin threw up her part in the extravaganza, and what Smythers had said thereupon—and how little Cockerill had threatened to knock him down if he said it again, and that he didn't dare; full particulars of the engagement of Miss Leggings to play the page in the new piece, and how and why they didn't think she would make much of it after all. The secret intelligence in the possession of these two young ladies was perfectly amazing; and yet they could sit quietly in the pit, and discuss the turning of a dress, and long for the next act; and Pets could produce from her pocket a warm and sticky bunch of cherries—tied up together neatly by the stalks—such as are sold at street-stalls for a half-penny; and they could proceed to refresh themselves with the fruit, notwithstanding its hardly inviting form, and devour it with evident relish.

I felt I owed a debt of gratitude to Lotty and Pets. I have hinted already how open and impressive is my nature. I made up my mind. I left the theatre for five minutes; I returned with a small paper-bag.

'Will you oblige me by helping me with this pound of cherries?' They peeped in at the red and yellow globes. I think women are quite as fond of white-hearts as of apples, and as easily tempted by them.

They were a little shy at first. Lotty would take one; then Pets would try—only one; not any more, thank you. But soon the cherries were in a course of rapid demolition, and there was the sound of the stones dropping on to the floor of the pit like intermittent hail.

(I know that Tibbs, the attorney's clerk, whose morals have been considerably injured by his ardent study of law reports, will begin to snigger and chuckle here, for reasons best known to himself; but I apprehend a gentleman of my weight, and age, and figure may proffer fruit in very frankness, and truth, and simplicity to two respectable young women, even in the pit of the Theatre-royal Lion, without any striking impropriety or unworthiness of motive.)

And now we are interested in the play again. A lively scene is going on. Chalks, the walking-gentleman, has challenged Bowker, the heavy man, to mortal combat, and has been termed a 'beardless boy' for his pains, which, considering how very blue and primy Chalks is about the chin and cheeks, is rather an inappropriate observation; and one combatant has said, 'Come on,' and the other has remarked, 'Have at ye then;' and there is a scramble of music in the orchestra, and we are all well aware that the old-established conflict between Vice and Virtue is about to come off yet once more.

'I say,' Lotty whispers hurriedly to Pets, 'did you see?'

'See what?'

'Look at the practicable window.'

Of course Pets looked where she was bid; and how could I help looking too? If our neighbour stares particularly, don't our eyes always turn in the same direction, to ascertain the object of his attention.

I perceive that a head is peeping in furtively at the practicable window; not one of the *dramatis personæ*—not connected in any way with the tragic transactions passing between Chalks and Bowker—not a histrionic head by any means, but a pale young man's, with a paper-cap on, who gazes at the audience as though unconscious that he can be perceived by them.

'Why, it's Gassy,' says Pets, laughing.

'Oh, do look at him!'

'He's trying to find us out'—and there is great mirth between the young women; they bring out their handkerchiefs to hide their faces in, and wipe away the tears resulting from their laughter. I regret that I do not see the joke.

'Who is Gassy?' I ask, looking at the pale face at the practicable window.

'Ask her!' says Pets.

'Ask her!' says Lotty; and they both hide their faces again.

Meanwhile, Gassy, utterly disregarding the desperate lunges and parries of Chalks and Bowker, and forming an absurd background object to that glorious encounter, scrutinises the pit steadily. At last he appears to discover our little party: a grin of recognition flashes on his face, and he disappears, just as Bowker is brought to earth, and to the cue of 'confusion' (very loud, and in Bowker's most ventral bass tones), the music is changed from hurried to slow and staccato; for Bowker has got to crawl about the stage, and breathe very heavily, and reveal the terrible secret, and curse in a general way, and die hard and gamy.

'Who is Gassy?' I appeal to Lotty, who seems to have more self-possession than Pets, and my thirst for information becoming insupportable.

'Hush! He's my brother. Doesn't Bowker do this fine? What a lovely deep voice he has!'

'Was he christened Gassy?' I persist; but Lotty laughs, and I can get no answer from her. Pets interposes.

'No, his name is William. Oh, I do so like this play!'

And now the green baize has parted the audience and the actors. The young man with the dirty collars, and the savage-looking woman in the upper boxes, scramble out of their seats; the companion of the blind man hales him out with rather a disregard for his shins; the smart lady and gentleman gather themselves together, and I know that the little fellow will be sent for a cab, and then scolded dreadfully for going leaving his Louisa alone, and in a draught, and her nerves upset by the performance, as he *knew* very well; and dirty canvas hangings come tumbling from the galleries, and shroud up the Theatre-royal Lion; and the lights are put out, and we are again in the street, almost cool by contrast with the hot theatre.

A stout man with a very shiny, curly-rimmed hat, and a fat close-shaven face, is talking loudly and angrily in the lobby.

'What do you mean by it? I won't have it! Do you want to sell me? Do you want to shut up the theatre? Twenty pounds to pay for gas—all since last Saturday—and here, not taking five pounds a night!'

'It's not my fault,' answers an expostulating voice.

'Don't tell me; you don't look after things. You want to ruin the whole lot; you know you do. There *must* be a leakage somewhere; you know there must—but you don't care; you're too lazy to look after it.'

'No, I ain't. It's the illumination in front as takes all the gas.'

'Then put it out. I won't have it at all. Do you want to sell me?' &c. There is great iteration in quarrelling.

'Ain't Smythers savage?' says Lotty. And I perceive that the person who has been scolded is the young man who looked through the practicable window; and I understand now why he is called Gassy. He is charged with the illumination of the theatre, and has derived his name from his occupation.

'Never mind, Gassy, dear;' and Pets looks upon him very kindly, and speaks to him very soothingly and tenderly.

'He's a big fool, that's what he is, and I should like jolly well to punch his ugly head off his shoulders.' But he melted under the sweet glances of Pets. She took hold of his hand—it was not very clean—but then I have hinted that her light glove was no better off, and very likely she would not have cared even if it had been.

'Ain't it awful hot, Pets?' he said in a calmer voice. 'Well, Lotty, how are you?' Brotherly affection has an off-hand, cool, settled character astounding to bystanders. 'Did you like the play?'

'O yes; it was delightful; we enjoyed it, oh, so much.' This was given as a duet.

'I wanted to come round, only I couldn't get away. Did you see me looking?'

'And this gentleman's been so kind, and given us such beautiful cherries.'

'Thank you, sir,' says Gassy frankly, and nodding his head to me. 'And now, what do you say? It's too hot almost to eat; I vote for penny ices.'

Lotty moves an amendment, and gingerbeer is also agreed upon. I leave them to the enjoyment of their pleasant and moderate refection. We part at the door of the theatre with much cordiality, and bowing, and hand shaking; and I venture to hope that we shall all meet again, and the ladies hope so too; and Gassy trusts that he may have a glass with me at some other and more convenient opportunity. They repair to the penny-ice shop; and I go on my way.

'He is Lotty's brother, and he loves her friend, and Pets loves him too. What a pleasant little business; what a happy fellow is Gassy, even in spite of Smythers!' So I muse.

And I give a guess respecting Lotty and Pets, and as it proved to be correct, I may say what it was; for I saw them again—though not to speak to, for

there was a gulf between us, filled by musicians—and they were attired in pink muslin, peppered with gold stars, and had delicate gauze wings on their shoulders, and tinselled silver butterflies on their heads, and were indeed fairy butterflies attendant on Queen Butterfly, in the famous pantomime of *Harlequin Goldengrub, or the Magic Moth and the King of the Caterpillar Islands*. In plain words, they were ballet-girls. And Pets smiled so prettily and wittingly, that I am quite sure she was still happy in the love of Gassy; and Lotty looked handsomer seen from a distance, and danced with great gusto and vigour, and I applauded her loudly.

When the inclination comes over me to give myself cynical airs, my thoughts recur to that hot night at the Theatre-royal Lion, and the friends I met there. When I feel prompted to disregard overtures made to me from Tarlatan Square, on the ground that I know all about the entertainments there, that I have been at the back of them, and seen through them, and that for me there is nothing new in them—I reflect upon Lotty and Pets sitting in the pit enjoying the play, intimately connected as it was with the daily drudgery of their lives, pregnant with dis-illusion, a tremendous sham, humbug, and trick, and yet pleasant, and delightful, and very amusing. They knew all about it; the tin-tacks and dirty lathes on the other side of the beautiful scenery, the domestic difficulties of Chalks, the pecuniary embarrassments of Bowker, the wrath of Smythers—everything about everybody, even to the man in the paper-cap, who turned on the gas that lit up the scene so refulgently, and yet how heartily they liked and lauded it all. For my part, I have had my lesson. I shall certainly accept the very next invitation from Tarlatan Square. I wonder whether it would be possible for me to sing with my hostess there the dear old duet from *Paul and Virginia* once more. Perhaps, for the sake of the other guests, it would be better not to make the attempt.

RAGS AND RAGPICKERS IN FRANCE.

THE manufacture of paper from rags dates from the fourteenth century; and the increased demand consequent upon the invention of printing, and the general spread of civilisation, rapidly developed this branch of the arts, till, in the year last ended, official documents inform us that thirty thousand tons of paper were manufactured from forty-five thousand tons of linen rags in the manufactories of France.

The collection of rags forms a distinct and wide-spread branch of commerce, both in town and country; and we might take a lesson of economy from the diligence and care exercised in it. So minutely and extensively is the search for rags carried out, that we will venture to say that there is not a single house in France left unvisited by the collectors, at least once or twice in the year; those who reside abroad are only too well aware of the rapid and mysterious disappearance of their sheets, towels, and linen, coincidently with the visits of the *chiffonnier*.

In Brittany—the part with which we are best acquainted—the rag-merchant occupies a distinguished and almost poetic position, especially in the descriptions of Emile Souvestre and other writers. He is a kind of cross between a Wandering Jew and a gipsy; but he leaves his family in some mountain-den while he wanders about in search of his peculiar objects. He goes from farm to farm, from cabin to cot, always preceded by his melancholy cry of *pillaver*, uttered loudly enough to startle the women in their innermost rooms. Not a thatched roof half-buried in foliage does he miss, not a path or byroad escapes him; no hovel is too foul, no threshold too mean for his visits. He prefers, indeed, the most humble abodes, for he well knows that he will

most likely find there what he seeks. He scents poverty from afar, and tracks it down with a sagacity which seems instinctive. He becomes a kind of spectre, knocking at the door of indigence, an ill-omened warning of the misery that is coming on the house. Scant grace or welcome does he find, nor does the usual blessing greet him on the threshold. To the rich, his visit appears almost an insult. If he knocks at the door of some well-to-do farmer, 'Go on elsewhere,' says the master; 'we have no rags here.' 'Ah, well—I'll come another day,' replies the pillawer, with a glance of malicious boding; and he passes on for the nonce, sure of finding poverty and rags at no great distance. But even in the poor man's cottage he never sets a foot; he waits at the threshold while the rags are brought to him, and the bargaining is made outside the house. No seat in the chimney-corner, not even a cup of cider, is offered to the ill-omened trader in misery.

The pillawer is the subject of one of the old Breton ballads cited by Emile Souvestre in his *Barzas-Breiz, Derniers Bretons*. It is too long for extraction, but a few stanzas may suffice to give an idea of its character:

'He sets out, the pillawer; he descends the mountain; his path lies among the poor of the earth. He leaves behind him wife and children, to return after long months—perhaps no more.

'Rude is the life of the pillawer; he tramps through the deep roads, with no shelter from the rain but the overhanging roots. His fare is a *manchet* of black bread, and he drinks from the mere where the frogs croak.

'Onward goes the pillawer, onward still, like the Wandering Jew: he has none to love him; no kin, no friends greet him in the lowlands; men close their doors when they see him, for he passes among them for a man without faith.

'Sundays and fête-days, he is ever on the road; he hears nor mass nor office; he is never seen to pray at the grave of his father or mother; he confesses not to his priest; the lowlanders say that the pillawer has neither parish nor creed.

'His parish is far away; there is his broom-thatched hut, but save for a few days, he is a stranger to it—a stranger to the village where he was baptized: the little children know him not, the dogs bark when he draws near.

'He knows not the news of his own fireside. When he returns home, he dares not to pass the threshold, for he knows not what God shall have sent to meet him—a cradle or a bier.

'And when his first-born has twelve years, the pillawer will say to him: "Go, my son, to your father's trade." And the child will go forth, to bruise his feet on the hard roads; and many a time will he say to his father that he is a-cold and a-weary.

'But his father will point to the sun, and say: "Behold the hearth of the good God; pray that he will light his fire for the poor little pillawer;" and he will point to the green herb, and add: "Behold the couch of the poor; pray that God will make soft the bed for the child of the mountains."

'Go on, poor pillawer; the ways of this world are hard to thy feet, but Jesus Christ judgeth not as the sons of men; be thou but honest and a good Christian, thy pains shall be repaid, and thou shalt wake up in glory.

'Foul with dirt are the rags which thy lean horse drags along, but the running water shall one day wash them clean; the rending wheels shall grind them, and they shall come forth as paper, fairer than white lawn.

'So with thee, poor pillawer; one day thou wilt leave thy corpse and tattered rags in a road-side ditch, but thy soul will fly forth white and fair, and the angels will bear it away to Paradise.'

The ragman of Paris has no such sentimental associations mingling with his trade; the hard battle for life which the poor fight in the metropolis leaves no

space for meditation or romance. Gold is the ruling deity, and 'money, no matter how, but money,' is the cry; still there are such things as caste, and rank, and station; and the ragman's caste is not at the top of the tree. 'Premiums have no smell,' say the *boursiers* of Vespasian's school; but he would be a bold philosopher who could separate the filthiness from the lucre of the chiffonnier, and place his profession among the other reproductive industries of the day.

Paris has its Dickens and its Mayhew in the persons of De Courey and Ferré; and the life of the chiffonnier is as well known as that of the London crossing-sweeper or pickpocket. Those who have visited the chiffonnier's haunts seem to shrink back appalled from the mass of moral corruption engendered by their foul misery. They are mostly those who hate work, not unfrequently men who have fallen from high positions, women who have fled from all social ties to a life of dissolute freedom, and children who have thrown off parental authority, and become all at once old in cunning and vice. They commonly herd together in some cellar without distinction of age or sex, amidst accumulations of filth and foulness, in an atmosphere which no Englishman could breathe and live: the price of their lodging varies from three-halfpence to twopence a night. Their food is as unwholesome as their lodging, consisting generally of the scraps of bread, broken victuals, old bones, and castaway vegetables, potato-parings, and cabbages, which they pick up in their rounds. These savoury fragments are all cast into a common caldron, and with the addition of several gallons of water, are boiled up into a kind of Spartan black broth, and ladled out into the tin-pots of the community.

It is, however, the old and steady patriarchs who thus club together and economise their resources. The younger chiffonniers patronise the cheap restaurants and ordinaries which abound in Paris, where they can fare sumptuously for twopence. Some even are extravagant enough to frequent the Restaurant des Pieds-Humides, where the price is five sous for the dinner; but in this charge is included the luxury of a cup of Mocha; and another son on Sundays and fêtes adds a *gloria* of cognac to the feast.

However economical they may be in their provision for the necessities of life, they one and all contrive to set apart a considerable portion of their daily earnings for the purchase of tobacco and drink: these are their greatest inducements to work.

There are grades of chiffonniers as there are of other professions, from the wealthy rag-merchant who lives upon the gains of the whole community, drives his carriage, and occasionally fails for half a million, down to the wretched pariah who has not even the means to buy a basket and crook, but hires himself out to an older hand. The amount of profit upon a day's work depends in no slight degree upon the skill and care bestowed in the selection and sorting of the contents of the basket. Each branch of articles has its divisions and subdivisions. The materials for paper-making, to which we shall confine ourselves, are rags, linen and woollen, and papers of all sorts and colours. The rags are sorted according to their material colour and fineness. The other contents of a ragman's basket may be more easily imagined than enumerated; but our French authority informs us that, next to old iron, old corks are the most valuable and *recherché* articles, as they are exchanged at the *barrières* for no small quantity of *vin bleu*.

The usual amount of a chiffonnier's daily earnings is from sevenpence-halfpenny to fifteenpence, a sum sufficient to keep him in comparative luxury, if intemperance did not run away with the better part of it. As a class, they live so literally from hand to mouth, that they frequently have not the wherewithal to pay for their night's lodging—that is to say,

not even the modest amount of three-halfpence. Every landlord who has an eye to business takes care to exact the price of the bed before the tenant enters on possession, and in default of payment, retains as a pledge the shirt or some equally valuable article of the chiffonnier's toilet.

The day's work begins with the first streaks of dawn, when Paris, though yet unwashed, is beautiful exceedingly; but the ragman has no eye for beauty, either natural or architectural; his eyes are fixed on the ground, and nothing escapes his notice. By eight or nine o'clock, his work is finished, and Paris is as clean as a new pin, swept and garnished, and fit for the dainty feet of beaux and belles. But, oh! shade of Cloacina, what would it be, but for our friends the chiffonniers? What an Angean stable if they were to go on strike for a week! From nine to eleven, the sorting and selling take place, after which the ragman is at leisure, and free to dispose of his time and money according to his taste. We need scarcely say that the *cabaret* and the *guinguette*, and every free-and-easy entertainment, receive his liberal patronage, and he reduces to a science the method of getting drunk at the very lowest figure. Many of the chiffonniers, however, are subject to fits of melancholy and hypochondria; they shun society, let their beards grow, and live in a state of misanthropy, like old Krook, holding converse with none but the *marchand of eau de vie*. These are the models much sought after by young academicians, when they are in want of a Timon or a Solon, or a long-bearded patriarch for a sacred picture.

Miserable as the condition of the ragman must be, that of the female portion of the community is worse. Having reached this state, fallen from it, may be, a high estate, from the splendour of a *dame aux camellias* to the condition of a last week's bouquet, she seems to have lost all self-respect and hope, and finds 'even in the lowest depth a deeper still.' A thoroughly bad woman is worse than a bad man, even as the angels fell lower than the hosts of Hades. It is generally the passion for drink that has brought them thus low, and having hired themselves out for their daily labour, to procure food and drink, they scarcely ever emerge from this slavery even to purchase a basket and crook, and set up for themselves.

The chiffonnier has generally adopted his profession as a means of procuring food with the least amount of labour; and though this crawling, lurking method of gaining the daily bread is more adapted to the old, it is found, that of the 800 rag-collectors who come under the notice of the police, more than three-fifths are from 17 to 36 years of age; so that while we would give the chiffonnier every indulgence as contributing to the spread of civilisation, we fear that his own motives are as sordid as his stock in trade.

The process of manufacturing paper is the same in France as in England, and is so well known as scarcely to demand notice. Every paper-mill has the same sights and the same smells: the long room, where the rags are sorted and cut up by young girls; the tanks, where the rags are washed, fermented, and bleached with chlorine; the room with the tearing and grinding machines, enclosed in small paddle-boxes, through which the rags circulate in a mixture reminding one of curds and whey; the great vats in which the rags are kept moving, by a great revolving beam, generally nicknamed Dan O'Connell, the Great Agitator, or by some other notable name, according to the workmen's political bias—these are familiar objects to all who have visited a paper-mill.

In former times, the paper was made from the liquid rag-paste, by dipping into it a copper basin, and distributing it over a wire-gauze, which allowed the moisture to drip through, and retained the paste: this was pressed between blankets, and dried on lines, then dressed with a solution of alum and gelatine, and pressed in hydraulic presses, to give it polish and

evenness. This tedious process, which necessitated a fresh operation for each sheet of paper, was superseded about 1789 by the present machine, said to be the invention of one Robert, a French workman, who sold it to M. Didot Saint-Leger. The first machines, however, were set up in England, machinery being, as yet, of very inferior execution on the continent; and it was not till after the peace, in 1815, that they were introduced into France.

By this new invention, the paste is mixed with the resin and alum, and any colouring matter employed, and made to run regularly from the reservoir down an inclined plane on to an endless wire-cloth, which passes slowly over rollers, and carries with it the gradually hardening paste. Upon this wire depends the pattern of the paper, and in this the French seem to leave us far behind. We have lately seen exquisite specimens of note-paper, some flowered, others damascened, starred, checkered, lined, squared, or tessellated, in all the variety of forms in which taste can appeal to ladies' eyes. The French colours also are far more tasty than our own; and while we have been aiming at perfect whiteness at a great expense, they have been able to infuse all the colours of the rainbow at a much cheaper rate. The reason of this is, that rags of any colour may be used in the manufacture of tinted paper, while the pure white alone is admissible for the snowy brilliance at which we aim. The paste thus formed is transmitted in an endless length over blankets, under rollers, between heated cylinders, and up and down, backwards and forwards, till it has attained its proper gloss and consistency. On arriving at the end of the room, it is cut into lengths as it unrolls itself from the cylinder, and passed over to the packers, to take its place in the ranks of literature, and for the increase of knowledge.

We would not take leave of our subject without an endeavour to point a moral, if we have failed to adorn our tale; for there is a *moralité*, as our neighbours say, to be found, like truth in the well, at the bottom of the ragman's basket. Let their example, in the first place, stimulate us to imitate their love of economy and their avoidance of waste; and, in the next, let it remind us that, in the dispensation of Providence, the most prodigal bounty goes hand in hand with the nicest economy. May we be led to think of the love which exhausts not itself by loving, of the dispensing which is richer by its outgoings, of the scattering which yet increaseth! The poor ragman gathers up the foul and tattered rags, and they become the tablets on which are written the wisdom of man and the truth of God; and he that gathers up the lost and the forsaken in this world, and renders them useful and honest members of society, shall in no wise lose his reward.

THE WILD HUNTRESS.

CHAPTER XIV.—SU-WA-NER.

BEYOND doubt, the dark form was that of a woman—a young one too, as evinced by her erect bearing, and a light agile movement, exhibited at the moment of our first beholding her. The attire was odd; and consisted of a brownish-coloured tunic—apparently of doeskin leather—reaching from the neck to the knees; underneath which appeared leggings of like material, ending in moccasins that covered the feet. The arms, neck, and head were entirely bare; and the colour of the skin, as seen upon these, differed from that of the outer garment only in being a shade or two darker! The woman, therefore, was not white, but an *Indian*: as was made further evident by the sparkling of beads and bangles around her neck, rings in her ears, and metal circlets upon her arms—all reflecting the light of the moon in copious coruscations. As I brought

my horse to a rest, I perceived that the figure was advancing towards us, and with rapid step.

My steed set his ears, and snorted with affright; the jade of the hunter had already given the example—each, no doubt, acting under the impulse of his rider.

Mine was a feeling of simple astonishment. Such an apparition in that place, and at that hour, was sufficient cause for surprise; but a more definite reason was, my observing that a different emotion had been roused in the breast of the young hunter—whose looks betrayed fear, rather than surprise!

'Fear of what?' I asked myself, as the figure advanced; and still more so, when it came near enough to enable me to make out the face. As far as the moonlight would permit me to judge, there was nothing in that face to fray either man or horse: certainly nothing to create an emotion, such as was depicted in the countenance of my companion.

The complexion was brown, as already observed; but the features, if not of the finest type, were yet comely enough to attract admiration; and they were lit up by a pair of eyes, whose liquid glance rivalled the sheen of the golden pendants sparkling on each side of them.

I should have been truly astonished at the behaviour of my guide, but for the natural reflection, that there was some cause for it, yet unknown to me. Evidently, it was not his first interview with this forest maiden: for I could now perceive that the person who approached was not exactly a woman, but rather a well-grown girl on the eve of womanhood. She was of large stature, nevertheless, with bold outline of breast, and arms that gave token of something more than feminine strength. In truth, she appeared possessed of a *physique* sufficiently formidable to inspire a cowardly man with fear—had such been her object; but I could perceive no signs of menace in her manner.

Neither could cowardice be an attribute of my travelling-companion. There was an unexplained something, therefore, to account for his present display of the emotion.

On arriving within six paces of the heads of our horses, the Indian paused in her steps: as if hesitating to advance. Up to this time, she had not spoken a word; neither had my companion, beyond a phrase or two that had involuntarily escaped him, on first discovering her presence in the glade.

'She here? an' at this time o' night!' I had heard him mutter to himself; but nothing more, until the girl had paused, as described. Then, in a low voice, and with a slightly trembling accent, he pronounced interrogatively the word 'Su-wa-nee?'

It was the name of the Indian maiden; but there was no reply.

'Su-wa-nee?' repeated he, in a louder tone, 'is it you?'

The answer was also given interrogatively.

'Has the White Eagle lost his eyes, by gazing too long on the pale-faced fair ones of Swampville? There is light in the sky, and the face of Su-wa-nee is turned to it. Let him look on it: it is not lovely like that of the *half-blood*, but the White Eagle will never see that face again.'

This declaration had a visible effect on the young hunter: the shade of sadness deepened upon his features; and I could hear a sigh, with difficulty suppressed; while, at the same time, he appeared desirous of ending the interview.

'It's late, girl,' rejoined he, after a pause: 'what for are ye here?'

'Su-wa-nee is here for a purpose. For hours she has been waiting to see the White Eagle—the soft hands of the pale-faced maidens have held him long.'

'Waitin' to see me! What do ye want wi' me?'

'Let the White Eagle send the stranger aside. Su-wa-nee must speak to him alone.'

'Thar's no need o' that: it's a friend that's wi' me.'

'Would the White Eagle have his secrets known? There are some he may not wish even for a friend to hear? Su-wa-nee can tell him one that will crimson his cheeks like the flowers of the red maple.'

'I have no saycrets, girl—none as I'm afraid o' bein' heerd by anybody.'

'What of the half-blood?'

'I don't care to hear o' her.'

'The White Eagle speaks falsely; he does care to hear. He longs to know what has become of his lost Marian. Su-wa-nee can tell him.'

The last words produced an instantaneous change in the bearing of the young hunter: instead of the repelling attitude, he had hitherto observed towards the Indian girl, I saw him bend eagerly forward, as if desirous of hearing what she had to say. Seeing that she had drawn his attention, the Indian again pointed to me, and inquired:

'Is the pale-faced stranger to know the love-secrets of the White Eagle?'

I saw that my companion no longer desired me to be a listener; and, without waiting for his reply, I drew my horse's head in the opposite direction, and was riding away.

In the turning, I came face to face with him; and by the moonlight shining full upon his countenance, I fancied I could detect some traces of mistrust still lingering on it.

My fancy was not at fault: for, on brushing close past him, he leaned towards me, and, in an earnest manner, muttered:

'Please, stranger! don't go fur—thar's danger in this girl. She's been arter me before.'

I nodded assent to his request; and, turning back into the little bay, that formed the embouchure of the path, I pulled up under the shadow of the trees.

At this point, I was not ten paces from the hunter, and could see him; but a little clump of white magnolias prevented me from seeing the girl—at the same time hiding both myself and horse from her sight.

The chirrup of the cicadas alone hindered me from hearing all of what was said; but many words reached my ear, and with sufficient distinctness, to give me a clue to the subject of the promised revelation.

Delicacy would have prompted me to retire a little farther off; but the singular caution, I had received from my companion, prevented me from obeying its impulse.

I could make out that a certain Marian was the subject of the conversation; and then more distinctively, that it was Marian Holt—just as I expected, the daughter of my squatter: that other and older one, of whom mention has been already made.

This part of the revelation was easily understood: since I was already better than half prepared for it. Equally easy of comprehension was the fact, that, this Marian was the sweetheart of my travelling-companion—*had been*, I should rather say; for, from what followed, I could gather that she was no longer in the neighbourhood; but some months before had left it, or been carried away—spirited off in some mysterious manner, leaving no traces of the why or whither she had gone.

Nearly all this I had conjectured before; for the young hunter had half revealed it to me by his manner, if not by words. Now, however, a point or two was added to my previous information relating to the fair Marian. *She was married*. Married—and to some odd sort of man, of whom the Indian appeared to speak slightly. His name I could make out to be Steevens, or Steebins, or something of the sort—not very intelligible by the Indian's mode of pronouncing it—and, furthermore, that he had been a schoolmaster in Swampville.

During the progress of the dialogue, I had my eye fixed on the young hunter. I could perceive that the

announcement of the marriage was quite new to him; and its effect was as that of a sudden blow. Of course, equally unknown to him had been the name of the husband; though, from the exclamatory phrase that followed, he had no doubt formed his conjectures.

'O God!' exclaimed he, 'I thort so—the very man to a done it. Lord ha' mercy on her!'

All this was uttered in a voice hoarse with emotion. 'Tell me!' continued he, 'whar are they gone? Ye say ye know?'

The shrill screech of a tree-cricket, breaking forth at that moment, hindered me from hearing the reply. The more emphatic words only reached me, and these appeared to be 'Utah' and 'Great Salt Lake.' They were enough to fix the whereabouts of Marian Holt and her husband.

'One question more!' said the rejected lover, and he hesitated, as if afraid to ask it. 'Can ye tell me—whether—she went *willin'ly*, or whether—thar wan't some force used?—by her father, or some un else? Can ye tell me that, girl?'

I listened eagerly for the response. Its importance can easily be understood by one who has *sued* in vain—one who has *woocoed* without *winning*. The silence of the cricket favoured me; but a long interval passed, and there came not a word from the lips of the Indian!

'Answer me, Su-wa-nee!' repeated the young man in a more appealing tone. 'Tell me that, and I promise—'

'Will the White Eagle promise to forget his lost love? Will he promise—'

'No, Su-wa-nee; I cannot promise that; I can *niver* forget her.'

'The heart can *hate* without forgetting.'

'Hate her? hate Marian? No! no!'

'Not if she be false?'

'How do I know that she war false? You have not told me whether she went *willin'ly* or agin her consent.'

'The White Eagle shall know then. His gentle doe went willingly to the covert of the wolf—*willingly*, I repeat; and Su-wa-nee can give proof of her words.'

This was the most terrible stroke of all. I could see the hunter shrink in his saddle, while a death-like pallor overspread his cheeks, and his eyes presented the glassy aspect of despair.

'Now!' continued the Indian, as if taking advantage of the blow she had struck, 'will the White Eagle promise to sigh no more after his false mistress? Will he promise to love one that can be true?'

There was an earnestness in the tone in which these interrogatories were uttered—an appealing earnestness—suddenly prompted by a burning headlong passion. It was now the turn of her who uttered them, to wait with anxiety for a response.

It came at length—perhaps to the laceration of that proud heart: for it was a negative to its dearest desire.

'No, no!' exclaimed the hunter confusedly. 'Impossible eyther to hate or forget her. She may a been false, an' no doubt are so; but it's too late for me; I can *niver* love agin.'

A half-suppressed scream followed this declaration, succeeded by some words that appeared to be uttered in a tone of menace or reproach. But the words were in the Chicasaw tongue; and I could not comprehend their import.

Almost at the same instant, I saw the young hunter hurriedly turning his horse—as if to ride away.

I fancied that the crisis had arrived, when my presence might be required; and, under this belief, I touched my steed with the spur, and trotted out into the open ground.

To my astonishment, I perceived that the hunter

was alone. The girl had disappeared from the glade!

CHAPTER XV.

MAKING A CLEAN BREAST OF IT.

'Where is she?—gone?' I mechanically asked, in a tone that must have betrayed my surprise.

'Yes—gone! gone! an' wi' a Mormon!'

'A Mormon?'

'Ay, stranger, a Mormon—a man wi' twenty wives! God forgi' her! I'd rather a heerd o' her death!'

'Was there a man with her? I saw no one!'

'O stranger, excuse my talk—you're thinkin' o' that ere Injun girl? Tain't her I'm speakin' about.'

'Who, then?'

The young hunter hesitated; he was not aware that I was already in possession of his secret; but he knew that I had been witness of his emotions, and to declare the name would be to reveal the most sacred thought of his heart.

Only for a moment did he appear to reflect; and then, as if relieved from his embarrassment, by some sudden determination, he replied:

'Stranger, I don't see why I shedn't tell ye all about this bisness. I don't know the reezun, but you've made me feel a kind o' confidence in you. I know it's a silly sort o' thing to fall in love wi' a handsom girl; but if ye'd only seen *her*.'

'I have no doubt, from what you say, she war a beautiful creature'—this was scarcely my thought at the moment—'and, as for fallin' in love with a pretty girl, none of us are exempt from that little weakness. The proud Roman conqueror yielded to the seductions of the brown-skinned Egyptian queen; and even Hercules himself was conquered by a woman's charms. There is no particular silliness in that: it is but the common destiny of man.'

'Well, stranger, it's been myen; an' I've hed reezun to be sorry for it; but it's no use tryin' to shet up the stable arther the hoss 's been stole out o't. She are gone now; an' that's the end o' it. I reckon I'll niver set eyes on her agin.'

The sigh that accompanied this last observation, with the melancholy tone in which it was uttered, told me that I was talking to a man who had truly loved.

'No doubt,' thought I, 'some strapping backwoods' wench has been the object of his passion'—for what other idea could I have about the child of a coarse and illiterate squatter? 'Love is as blind as a bat; and this red-haired hoyden has appeared a perfect Venus in the eyes of the handsome fellow—as not unfrequently happens—a Venus, with evidently a slight admixture of the prudential Juno in her composition. The young backwoodsman is poor; the schoolmaster perhaps a little better off; in all probability, not much, but enough to decide the preference of the shrewd Marian.'

Such were my reflections at the moment, partly suggested by my own experience.

'But you have not yet told me who this sweet-heart was? Not the Indian damsel you've just parted with?'

'No, stranger, nothin' o' the kind: though there are some Injun in *her* too. 'Twar o' her the girl spoke, when ye heerd her talk o' a half-blood. She ain't jest that—she's more white than Injun; her mother only war a half-blood—o' the Chicasaw nation, that used to b'long in these parts.'

'Her name?'

'It war Marian Holt; it are now Stebbins, I s'pose: since I've jest heerd she's married to a feller o' that name.'

'She has certainly not improved her name.'

'She are the daughter o' Holt the squatter—the same whar you say you're a-goin'. Thar's another, as

I told ye; but she's a younger un. Her name's Lillian.

'A pretty name. The older sister was very beautiful then?'

'I niver set eyes on the like o' her.'

'Does the younger one resemble her?'

'Ain't a bit like her—different as a squ'll from a coon.'

'She's not beautiful, then?'

'Well, that depends on people's ways o' thinkin'. Most people as knew 'em liked Lillian the best, an' thort her the handsomest o' the two. That wan't my notion. Besides, Lilly's only a young critter—not out o' her teens, as they say.'

'But if she be also pretty, why not try to fall in love with her? Down in Mexico, where I've been lately, they have a shrewd saying: *Un clavo saca otro clavo*, meaning that "one nail drives out another"—as much as to say, that one love cures another.'

'Ah, stranger! that may be all very well in Mexico, whar I've heerd they ain't partickler about thar way o' lovin'; but we've a sayin' here jest the contrary o' that: "Two bars can't get into the same trap."

'Ha, ha, ha! Well, your backwoods proverb is perhaps the truer one, as it is the more honest. But you have not yet told me the full particulars of your affair with Marian? You say she has gone away from the neighbourhood?'

'You shall hear it all, stranger. I reckon thar can be no harm in tellin' it to you; an', if you've a mind to listen, I'll make a clean breast o' the whole business.'

The hunter proceeded with his revelation—to him, a painful one—and, although I had already divined most of the particulars, I interrupted him only with an occasional interrogative. The story was as I had anticipated. He had been in love with Marian Holt; and was under the impression that she returned it. She had given him frequent meetings in the forest—in that very glade, where we had encountered the Indian girl, and in which we were still lingering—her father was not aware of these interviews, as there had been some coolness between him and the young hunter, and the lovers feared that he might not approve of their conduct. This was the prologue of the hunter's story. The epilogue I give in his own words.

'Twar a mornin'—jest five months ago—she had promised to meet me here; an' I war seated on yonder log waitin' for her. Jest then, some Injuns war comin' through the gleed. That girl ye saw war one o' 'em. She had a nice bullet-pouch to sell, an' I bought it. The girl would insist in puttin' it on; an' while she war doin' so, I war fool enough to gie her a kiss. Some devil hed put it in my head. Jest at that minnit, who shed come right into the gleed but Marian herself! I meant nothin' by kissin' the Injun; but I s'pose Marian thort I did: she'd already talked to me 'bout this very girl; an' I believe war a leetle bit jealous o' her—for the Injun ain't to say ill-lookin'. I wanted to 'pologise to Marian; but she wouldn't listen to a word; an' went off, in a way I niver seed her in before. 'Twar the last time I ever set eyes on her.'

'Indeed!'

'Ay, stranger, an' it's only this minnit, an' from that same Injun girl, that I've heerd she's married, an' gone off to the Mormons. The Injun's had it from some o' her people, that seed Marian a crossin' the parairies.'

'This Indian damsel—Su-wa-nee, I think you named her—what of her? She appears to take a considerable interest in your affairs.'

'Ah! stranger, that's another o' the consequences o' doin' what wan't right. Since the day I gin her that kiss, she'd niver let me alone, but used to bother

me every time I met her in the woods; an' wud a come arter me to my own cabin, if it hadn't a been for the dogs, that wud tar an Injun to pieces. She war afeerd o' them; but not o' me, no matter how I thraitened her. I war so angry wi' her, for what had happened—though, arter all, 'twar more my fault than hern—but I war so vexed wi' her about the ill-luck, that I used to keep out o' her way as well as I could, an' didn't speak to her for a long time. She got riled 'bout that, an' thraitened revenge; an' one night, as I war comin' from Swampville, 'bout this time, only 'twar as dark as a pot o' pitch, I war jest comin' out into this very gleed, when all o' a suddint my ole boss gin a jump forrard, an' I feeled somethin' prick me from behind. 'Twar the stab o' some sort o' a knife, that cut me a leetle above the hip, an' made me bleed like a buck. I know'd who did it; tho' not that night—for it war so dark among the bushes, I couldn't see a steim; but I kim back in the mornin', an' seed tracks. They war the tracks o' a moocasin; an' I know'd them to be hern.'

'Su-wa-nee's tracks?'

'Sartin. I know'd them well enough, as I'd often seed her tracks through the crik bottom.'

'Did you take no steps to punish her?'

'Well—no—I didn't.'

'How is that? I think it would have been but prudent of you to have done something—if only to prevent a recurrence of the danger.'

'Well, stranger, to tell truth, I war a leetle ashamed o' the whole business. Had it been a man, I'd a punished him; but they do say the girl's in love wi' me, arter her Injun way; an' I didn't like to be revengeful. Besides, it war mostly my own fault; I had no bisness to a fooled wi' her.'

'And you think she will not trouble you again?'

'I don know about that, arter what's happened the night. She's gone away thraitnin' agin. I did think she'd gin up the notion o' revenge; for she know'd I'd found out that 'twar her stabbed me. I told her so, the next time I seed her; an' she 'peared pleased 'bout my not havin' her ta'en up. She said it war generous o' the White Eagle—that's the name her people gies me—for thar's a gang o' them still lives down the crik. She gin me a sort o' promise she wouldn't trouble me agin; but I warn't sure o' her; an' that's the reezun, stranger, I didn't want ye to go fur away.'

'I think it would be prudent in you to keep well on your guard. She appears to be rather an unreflecting damsel; and, from what you have told me, a dangerous one. She certainly has a strange way of shewing her affection; but it must be confessed, you gave her some provocation; and, as the poet says, "Hell knows no fury like a woman scorned."

'That's true, stranger.'

'Her conduct, however, has been too violent to admit of justification. You appear to have been unfortunate in your sweethearts—with each in an opposite sense: one loves you too much, and the other apparently not enough! But how is it you did not see her again—Marian, I mean?'

'Well, you understand, I wan't on the best o' terms wi' old Hick Holt, an' couldn't go to his clarin'. Besides, arter what had happened, I didn't like to go near Marian anyhow—leastwise for a while. I thort it would blow over, 's soon's she'd find out that I war only jokin' wi' the Injun.'

'So one would have supposed.'

'Twar nigh two weeks afore I heerd anything o' her; an' then I larned that she war gone away! Nobody could tell why or whar, for nobody knew, 'ceptin' Hick Holt himself; an' he ain't the sort o' man to tell saycrets. Lord o' mercy! I know now; an' it's worse than I expected. I'd sooner a heerd she war dead.'

A deep-drawn sigh, from the very bottom of his

soul, admonished me that the speaker had finished his painful recital.

I had no desire to prolong the conversation; I saw that silence would be more agreeable to my companion; and, as if by a mutual and tacit impulse, we turned our horses' heads to the path; and proceeded onwards across the glade.

As we were about entering the timber on the other side, my guide reined up his horse; and sat for a moment gazing upon a particular spot—as if something there had attracted his attention. But what? There was no visible object—at least, none that was remarkable—on the ground, or elsewhere!

Another sigh, with the speech that followed, explained the singularity of his behaviour.

'Thar!' said he, pointing to the entrance of the forest-path—'thar's the place whar I last looked on Marian!'

CHAPTER XVI.

A PREDICAMENT IN PROSPECT.

For half a mile beyond the glade, the trace continued wide enough to admit of our riding abreast; but, notwithstanding this advantage, no word passed between us. My guide had fallen back into his attitude of melancholy—deepened, no doubt, by the intelligence he had just received—and sat loosely in his saddle, his head drooping forward over his breast. Bitter thoughts within rendered him unconscious of what was passing without; and I felt that any effort I might make to soften the acerbity of his reflections would be idle. There are moments when words of consolation may be spoken in vain—when, instead of soothing a sorrow, they add poison to its sting.

I made no attempt, therefore, to rouse my companion from his reverie; but rode on by his side, as silently as he.

Indeed, there was sufficient unpleasantness in my own reflections to give me occupation. Though troubled by no heart-canker of the past, I had a future before me that was neither brilliant nor attractive; and the foreknowledge I had now gained of squatter Holt, had imbued me with a keen presentiment, that I was treading upon the edge of a not very distant dilemma.

Once, or twice, was I on the point of communicating my whole affair to my travelling-companion; and why not? With the openness of an honest heart, had he confided to me the most important, as well as the most painful secret, of his life: why should I withhold my confidence from him on a subject of comparatively little importance?

My reason for not making a confidant of him sooner has been already given. It no longer existed. So far from finding in him an ally of my yet hypothetical enemy, in all likelihood, I should have him on my side—at all events, I felt certain I might count upon his advice; and, with his knowledge of the situation, that might be worth having.

I was on the eve of declaring the object of my errand, and soliciting his counsel thereon, when I saw him suddenly rein in, and turn towards me. In the former movement, I imitated his example.

'The road forks here,' said he; 'the path on the left goes straight down to Holt's clarin—the other's the way to my bit o' a shanty.'

'I shall have to thank you for the very kind service you have done me, and say "Good-night."'

'No—not yet. I ain't agoin' to leave ye, till I've put you 'ithin sight o' Holt's cabin, tho' I can't go wi' ye to the house: as I told ye, he an' I ain't on the best o' terms.'

'I cannot think of your coming out of your way—especially at this late hour. I'm some little of a tracker myself; and, perhaps, I can make out the path.'

'No, stranger! Thar's places whar the trace is

a'most blind, an' you might get out o' it. Thar'll be no moon out. It runs through a thick timbered bottom, an' thar's an ugly bit o' swamp. As for the lateness, I'm not very regular in that way; an' thar's a sort o' road up the crik by which I can get home. 'Twan't to bid you good-night, that I stopped here.'

'What, then?' thought I, trying to conjecture his purpose, while he was pausing in his speech.

'Stranger!' continued he in an altered tone, 'I hope you won't take offence if I ask you a question?'

'Not much fear of that, I fancy: ask it freely.'

'Are ye sure o' a bed at Holt's?'

'Well, upon my word, to say the truth, I am by no means sure of one. It don't signify, however; I have my old cloak and my saddle; and it wouldn't be the first time, by hundreds, I've slept in the open air.'

'My reezuns for askin' you are, that, if you ain't sure o' one, an' don't mind stretchin' yourself on a bar-skin, thar's such a thing in my shanty entirely at your service.'

'It is very kind of you; and, perhaps, I may have occasion to avail myself of your offer. In truth, I am not very confident of meeting with a friendly reception at the hands of your neighbour Holt, much less being asked to partake of his hospitality.'

'D'ye say so?'

'Indeed, yes. From what I have heard, I have reason to anticipate rather a cold welcome.'

'Indeed? But—'

My companion hesitated in his speech—as if meditating some observation which he felt delicate about making.

'I'm a'most ashamed,' continued he, at length, 'to put another question, that war on the top o' my tongue.'

'I shall take pleasure in answering any question, you may think proper to ask me.'

'I shesn't ask it, if it wa'n't for what you've jest now said; for I heerd the same question put to you this night afore, an' I heerd your answer to it. But I reckon 'twar the way in which it war asked that offended you; an' on that account your answer war jest as it should a been!'

'To what question do you refer?'

'To your business out here wi' Hick Holt. I don't want to know it, out o' any curiosity o' my own—that's sartin, stranger.'

'You are welcome to know all about it. Indeed, it was my intention to have told you before we parted; as well as to ask you for some advice upon the matter.'

Without further parley, I communicated the object of my visit to Mud Creek—concealing nothing that I deemed necessary for the elucidation of the subject. Without a word of interruption, the young hunter heard my story to the end; but, from the play of his features, as I revealed the more salient points, I could perceive that my chances of an amicable adjustment of my claim were far from being brilliant.

'Well, do you know,' said he, when I had finished speaking, 'I had a suspicion that that might be your business. I don't know why I shed a thort so; but maybe 'twar because thar's been some others come here to settle o' late, an' found squatters on thar groun'—jest the same as Holt's on yourn. That's why ye heerd me say, a while ago, that I shesn't like to buy over his head.'

'And why not?'

I awaited the answer to this question, not without a certain degree of nervous anxiety: I was beginning to comprehend the counsel of my Nashville friend on the ticklish point of *pre-emption*.

'Why, you see, stranger; as I told you, Hick Holt's a rough customer; an' I reckon he'll be an ugly one to deal wi', on a business o' that kind.'

'Of course, being in possession, he may purchase the land. He has the right of pre-emption.'

'Tain't for that. *He ain't agoin' to pre-empt*, nor buy neyther, an' for the best o' reezuns: he hain't got a red cent in the world, an' couldn't buy as much land as would make him a millyun patch—not he.'

'How does he get his living, then?'

'Oh, as for that, jest some at like myself. *Thar's* gobs o' game in the woods—both bar an' deer; an' the clarin' grows him corn. *Thar's* squ'lls, an' 'possum, an' turkeys too; an' lots o' fish in the crick—if one gets tired o' the bar an' deer meat, which I shed never do.'

'But how about clothing, and other necessaries that are not found in the woods?'

'As for our clothin', it ain't hard to find. We can get that in Swampville, by swopping skins for it, or now an' then some deer-meat. 'O' anythin' else, *thar* ain't much needed 'bout here—powder, an' lead, an' a pound or two o' coffee, an' tobacco. Once in a while, if ye like it, a leetle *old corn*.'

'Corn! I thought the squatter raised that for himself?'

'So he do raise corn; but I see, stranger, you don't understand our odd names. *Thar's* two kinds o' corn in these parts—that as has been to the still, and that as hain't. It's the first o' these sorts that Hick Holt likes best.'

'Oh! I perceive your meaning. He's fond of a little corn-whisky, I presume?'

'I reckon he are—that same squatter—fonder o' t'han milk.'

'But surely,' continued the hunter, changing the subject, as well as the tone of his speech—'surely, stranger, you ain't agoin' on your business the night?'

'I've just begun to think, that it is rather an odd hour to enter upon an estate. The idea didn't occur to me before.'

'Besides,' added he, '*thar's* another reezun. If Hick Holt's what he used to be, he ain't likely to be very nice about this time o' night. I hain't seen much o' him lately; but, I reckon, he's as fond o' a drink as ever he war; an' tain't often he goes to his bed 'ithout a skiful. *Thar's* ten chances agin one, o' your findin' him wi' a brick in his hat.'

'That would be awkward.'

'Don't think o' goin' to-night,' continued the young hunter in a persuasive tone. 'Come along wi' me; an' you can ride down to Holt's in the mornin'. You'll then find him more reasonable to deal wi'. I can't offer you no great show o' entertainment; but *thar's* a piece o' deer-meat in the house, an' I reckon I can raise a cup o' coffee, an' a pone or two o' bread. As for your horse, the ole corn-crib ain't quite empty yet.'

'Thanks—thanks!' said I, grasping the hunter's hand in the warmth of my gratitude. 'I accept your invitation.'

'This way, then, stranger!'

We struck into the path that led to the right; and, after riding about two miles further, arrived at the solitary home of the hunter—a log-cabin surrounded by a clearing.

I soon found he was its sole occupant, as he was its owner—some half-dozen large dogs being the only living creatures, that were there to bid us welcome.

A rude horse-shed was at hand—a 'loose box,' it might be termed, as it was only intended to accommodate one—and this was placed at the disposal of my Arab. The 'critter' of my host had, for that night, to take to the woods, and choose his stall among the trees; but to that he was well inured.

A close-chinked cabin for a lodging; a bear-skin for a bed; cold venison, corn-bread, and coffee for supper; with a pipe to follow: all these, garnished with the

cheer of a hearty welcome, constitute an entertainment not to be despised by an old campaigner; and such was the treatment I met with, under the hospitable clapboard roof of the young backwoodsman—Frank Wingrove.

A PAINTER'S TABLE-TALK.

WE have biographers enough and to spare in the present day, but we have by no means too many good ones. So soon as any one dies who has the least pretensions to greatness, his 'Remains' are wrangled for by a whole tribe of posthumous editors, and *réchauffé* in half-a-dozen forms for the library table. When the subject is of itself noteworthy, the interest is often beaten out to gold-leaf thinness, for the purpose of spreading over those two volumes, which are the orthodox number for biography, as are three for fiction. When, on the other hand, the original materials are scanty, the result is meagre indeed, and has commonly to be eked out by the introduction of the hero's godfathers and godmothers, or by an appendix with his genuine autograph, and half-a-dozen letters to his wine-merchant. To meet with readable 'Recollections' of even the most eminent man is therefore rare, while to be presented with such respecting one whose feet have kept the cool sequestered vales, or at most have climbed the hills of Life, and not the mountains, is almost unexampled. Mr Tom Taylor is one of the few who has succeeded in editing both kinds of autobiography. He shewed not only appreciation of his subject, but judgment in pruning and suppressing, when he gave us that memorable book, the life of Haydon; his present labour of love* has been expended upon a less known painter, the execution of whose works was more equal to his conception of what they should have been. Robert Leslie seldom—scarcely ever—painted 'out of his own head'; he suffered the old poets, satirists, and story-tellers to supply his subjects, and contented himself with embodying their creations more satisfactorily and strikingly than perhaps any other artist. His name, therefore, is not so familiar to the public as are his works; and thousands have seen and admired his 'Sir Roger de Coverley going to Church,' his 'Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman,' or his 'Sancho Panza and the Duchess,' who have been grateful to Addison, and Sterne, and Cervantes, rather than to himself, for the treat he set before them. His own life was prosperous, as it deserved to be, and proportionally uneventful, nor is that one of the two volumes which treats solely of himself and his own doings by any means the more interesting. The whole work is modestly but accurately entitled *Autobiographical Recollections*, and forms one of the most charming examples of table-talk we ever read. Not seldom have we sat *tête-à-tête* with some retired Lion or Lioness of Art or Literature, and listened to their discourse upon what they have heard or seen in bygone times; what great ones they have met under this and the other circumstance, and what good thing was said which the greedy public had as yet not fastened upon. When a monologist of this sort is judicious of selection, and not too egotistical, we know no more pleasant companion; and just such a one do we find in the book before us, with the additional advantage that we can shut it up (which is difficult to be done with the Lion), when we have had a sufficiency of anecdote, and walk away.

Leslie sailed to America in 1799, in a ship carrying twenty-four guns, and was attacked by a French privateer, greatly superior in force. The temper of the English, young and old, towards France at that bellicose period was curiously exemplified in the course of the action. 'A wad from one of the

* *Autobiographical Recollections of Leslie. J. Murray.*

Frenchman's 32-pound carronades struck the starboard quarter-rail, and flew back, spinning round with great velocity. The captain instantly attempted to jump on it and stop it, almost pushing me down to get it. Then tearing and cutting it to pieces, he charged the larboard 6-pounder several times, and, stuffing the fragments of the wad into it, fired it back again at the Frenchman, swearing bitterly at the whole nation all the time. Two boys, from thirteen to fifteen years of age, got a stroke or two from the first officer for dancing hornpipes on the main-deck during the heaviest part of both ships' fire. Another boy, in carrying forward a 24-pound cartridge, had it shot away from his hands. "There," said he, with an oath directed to the Frenchman, "you —, now I must go back for another!"

It is rare, however, to find even so much of personal matter as the above in Mr Leslie's volume; his modesty shrinks from narrating what happens to himself, however indirectly; and he prefers to record the sayings of such eminent persons as the world is eager to listen to, and with whom he enjoyed peculiar opportunities of associating. His account of Coleridge, about whom so much has been written, in blame as well as praise, is exceedingly favourable. "It is not the lot of any one, twice in his life," writes he, "to meet with so extraordinary a man." The poet, in speaking of his favourite Shakespeare, observed "that the difficulty was great in imagining an expression adequate to the feelings of Othello when he first sees Iago after having discovered his villainy, and he thought it a master-stroke of Shakespeare to surmount it as he has done:

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee."

And again: "I can never read," said he, "any of those scenes in which children are introduced, without laying the book down, and *loving Shakespeare over again.*" Coleridge's lectures were extemporaneous, but he had books about him for quotation; on turning to one of these, which happened to be a work of his own, he said: "As this is a secret which I confided to the public a year or two ago, and which, to do the public justice, has been very faithfully kept, I may be permitted to read you a passage from it." Speaking of the utilitarians, he observed: "The penny-saved penny-got utilitarians forget, or do not comprehend, *high moral utility* — the utility of poetry and of painting, and of all that exalts and refines our nature." He thought Lord Byron's misanthropy was affected, or partly so, and that it would wear off as he grew older. He said that Byron's perpetual quarrel with the world was as absurd as if the spoke of a wheel should quarrel with the movement of which it must of necessity partake. Leslie once found Coleridge driving the balls on 'a bagatelle board for a kitten to run after them. He noticed that, as soon as the little thing turned its back to the balls, it seemed to forget all about them, and played with its tail. "I am amused," he said, "with their little short memories." A few days after his tragedy of *Remorse* appeared, Coleridge "was sitting in the coffee-room of a hotel, and heard his name coupled with a coroner's inquest, by a gentleman who was reading a newspaper to a friend. He asked to see the paper, which was handed to him with the remark, that "it was very extraordinary that Coleridge, the poet, should have hanged himself just after the success of his play; but he was always a strange mad fellow." "Indeed, sir," said Coleridge, "it is a *most extraordinary* thing that he should have hanged himself, and be the subject of an inquest, and yet that he should at this moment be speaking to you." The astonished stranger hoped he had "said nothing to hurt his feelings," and was made easy on that point. The newspaper related that a gentleman in black had been cut down from a tree in Hyde Park, without money or papers in his pockets, his shirt being marked

"S. T. Coleridge;" and Coleridge was at no loss to understand how this might have happened, since he seldom travelled without losing a shirt or two."

Almost all who knew him, though it were ever so slightly, were moved to come to him for advice in all matters, save those, we conclude, concerning the investment of money. "When Allston was suffering extreme depression of spirits, immediately after the loss of his wife, he was haunted, during sleepless nights, by horrid thoughts; and he told me that diabolical imprecations forced themselves into his mind. The distress of this to a man so sincerely religious as Allston may be imagined. He wished to consult Coleridge, but could not summon resolution. He desired, therefore, that I would do it; and I went to Highgate, where Coleridge was at that time living with Mr Gillman. I found him walking in the garden, his hat in his hand (as it generally was in the open air), for he told me that, having been one of the Blue-coat boys, among whom it is the fashion to go bareheaded, he had acquired a dislike to any covering of the head. I explained the cause of my visit, and he said: "Allston should say to himself, '*Nothing is me but my will.*' These thoughts, therefore, that force themselves on my mind are no part of *me*, and there can be no guilt in them." If he will make a strong effort to become indifferent to their recurrence, they will either cease, or cease to trouble him." He said much more, but this was the substance; and after it was repeated to Allston, I did not hear him again complain of the same kind of disturbance." Of Charles Lamb and his associates, Coleridge wrote: "His character is a *sacred* one with me; no associations that he may form can hurt the purity of his mind, but it is not, therefore, necessary that I should see all men with his eyes." And again: "Nothing ever left a stain on that gentle creature's mind, which looked upon the degraded men and things around him like moonshine on a dunghill, which shines and takes no pollution. All things are shadows to him, except those which move his affections."

From the dread of appearing affected, says Leslie, "Lamb sometimes injured himself by his behaviour before persons who were slightly acquainted with him. With the finest and tenderest feelings ever possessed by man, he seemed carefully to avoid any display of sentimentality in his talk. The following trifling anecdote is merely given as an illustration of his playfulness. I dined with him one day at Mr Gillman's. Returning to town in the stage-coach, which was filled with Mr Gillman's guests, we stopped for a minute or two at Kentish Town. A woman asked the coachman, "Are you full inside?" Upon which Lamb put his head through the window and said: "I am quite full inside; that last piece of pudding at Mr Gillman's did the business for me." But he would give replies of that kind when something of quite another character was expected from him, through the morbid fear above alluded to; and the painter, Stothard, suffered from the same weakness, from which, indeed, few graceful and poetic minds are altogether exempt. "Full as his countless works are of exquisite sentiment, I never heard him use the word *sentiment* in his life. I spoke to him one day of his touching picture of a sailor taking leave of his wife or sweetheart, and he said: "I am glad you like it, sir; it was painted with japper's gold size."

Of Sidney Smith, Mr Leslie has much to say, all of it good, of course, and some of it new; nor does a story lose anything in our painter's hands, who has an excellent eye for colour and effect. "At a dinner-party at Lord Lyndhurst's, at which he was present, the conversation turned on the custom, in India, of widows burning themselves, an instance of which was recent. When the subject was pretty well exhausted, Smith began to defend the practice, asserting that no wife who truly loved her husband could wish to survive him."

"But, if Lord Lyndhurst were to die, you would be sorry that Lady Lyndhurst should burn herself."

"Lady Lyndhurst," he replied, "would no doubt, as an affectionate wife, consider it her duty to burn herself, but it would be our duty to put her out; and, as the wife of the Lord Chancellor, Lady Lyndhurst should not be put out like an ordinary widow. It should be a state affair. First, a procession of the judges, and then of the lawyers."

"But where, Mr Smith, are the clergy?"

"All gone to congratulate the new Chancellor."

Sidney Smith, after travelling for some hours in a stage-coach with one other passenger only, a lady, remarked, as he was about to leave her: "We have been some time together, and I dare say you think me a very odd fellow, and would like to know who I am."

"Indeed, sir, I should."

"Well, then, madam," he said, as the coach stopped, and he was getting out, "I must inform you that I am the stout gentleman who was seen by Mr Washington Irving's nervous friend."

With reference to George IV.'s known dislike to Peel, and contempt for his plebeian origin, and supposed want of 'taste,' the witty canon used to tell this story: 'Peel, when in the ministry, and on a visit at the Brighton Pavilion, was called out of bed in the middle of the night to attend his majesty in what—his dinner having disagreed with him in a very alarming manner—the king supposed to be his last moments. Peel was much affected, and the king, after a few words, which he could scarcely utter, said: "Go, my dear Peel—God bless you! I shall never see you again;" and as Peel turned to leave the room, he added faintly: "Who made that dressing-gown, my dear Peel? It sits very badly behind. God bless you, my dear fellow! Never employ that tailor again."

Samuel Rogers, who has had but hard measure dealt him by many an autobiographer and writer of 'Recollections,' is spoken of by Leslie almost lovingly; but 'gently comes the world to those that are cast in gentle mould,' and it must have been scarcely possible for the most satirical of men to keep their acid in the presence of one so genial as our author. We can easily believe, however, how excellent a story-teller was the poet-banker, and what a fund of stories the aged author of the *Pleasures of Memory* must have possessed. He spoke one day of a 'wretch who, for some atrocious crime, was hanged in chains. His whole life had been so desperately wicked, that the country people believed his body would be carried away by the devil. The day after his execution, their prediction seemed verified, for the corpse was gone; but, strange to say, in about eight or ten days, it was there again, safely enclosed within the irons, and as if but newly dead. The truth was, that on the night of the execution, a farmer and his son who had been for some days from home, were returning in a cart, and passing close to the gibbet, were startled by a groan from the body, and then a feeble voice imploring help. When they got the fellow home, they nursed him with the greatest care, till, in the middle of one night, his deliverer was disturbed by a noise, and discovered the villain in the act of packing up every article of value in the house which he could conveniently carry away. The farmer had just time to awake his son, who agreed with him that they had better put their new friend into his chains again.'

Of Sir Walter Scott, although Leslie stayed at Abbotsford, and knew him well, there is nothing very quotable; but he testifies to some gross inaccuracies in the *Life* by Lockhart, which, although concerning matters of little importance, are significant, indeed, of the doubtful character of the book as a record of facts. The two best things, perhaps, in all our painter's Table-talk, are told, however, of persons unknown to fame. Here is a story told by one Morgan,

a sea-captain, concerning the choice of a husband at sea, which may afford a profitable hint to young ladies *en voyage*: 'Single ladies often cross the water under the especial care of the captain of the ship; and if a love-affair occurs among the passengers, the captain is usually the *confidante* of one or both parties. A very fascinating young lady was placed under Morgan's care, and three young gentlemen fell desperately in love with her. They were all equally agreeable, and the young lady was puzzled which to encourage. She asked the captain's advice. "Come on deck," he said, "the first day when it is perfectly calm—the gentlemen will, of course, all be near you. I will have a boat quietly lowered down; then do you jump overboard, and see which of the gentlemen will be the first to jump after you. I will take care of you."

'A calm day soon came; the captain's suggestion was followed, and two of the lovers jumped after the lady at the same instant. But between these two the lady could not decide, so exactly equal had been their devotion. She again consulted the captain. "Take the man that didn't jump—he's the most sensible fellow, and will make the best husband."

The other anecdote is one of which the same may be said as Rogers remarked of a certain *mot* of Smith's—that the non-appreciation of it would prove the total lack of humour in any man. 'Maltby was one of the most absent of men. While in Paris together, Rogers dined at a party where a lady who sat next him did not know him at first, but after hearing him talk for some time, discovered who he was. Maltby was not at this dinner, and Rogers telling him of this lady, said, "She asked if my name was not Rogers." "And was it?" inquired Maltby.'

There is not one word, in all Mr Leslie's *Recollections*, that can give a moment's pain to man or woman; they respect the memories of the dead as well as the feelings of the living; and well would it be for those without the charmed circles of art and literature, if hands like his could be more often found fit to be trusted with a note-book.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

Now that volunteers and rifle-practice have become an institution, recognised by royal demonstration and national sympathy, it appears that more and more study and attention will be paid to the science and art of the subject. The rifle, and how to use it, has been the text of popular lectures: the Royal Society lent their spacious meeting-room for a course of lectures to the corps which drills in the quadrangle of Burlington House; and many a man who never before thought on the subject, now understands something of the theory of projectiles. An eminent professor at Glasgow, not content with theory, betook himself for a fortnight to Hythe to learn the practice, and has returned to his post a skilled marksman. These instances denote an earnest, not to say a studious spirit, which can hardly fail to have a generally beneficial result, especially when taken in connection with another fact, proved by the incidents of the past few months—namely, that time can be spared from business for physical training and exercise without any detriment, and with positive advantage to tens of thousands of men.

The science of terrestrial magnetism may be said to have advanced another step by the publication of General Sabine's second volume of *St Helena Observations*—a large and handsome quarto. It includes a notice of results obtained at Peking, Falkland Islands, Cape of Good Hope, and other places. The author is well known for his researches into the interesting science herein treated of; among the latest facts which he has brought to light is the identity of the observed phenomena

at places far apart. For instance, if the movements of the magnet, the yearly maxima and minima, be represented by two lines, or curves, as they are called, the direction of the lines is found to be the same at Toronto in the northern hemisphere, and at Hobart in the southern, the same also at St Helena and at Kew, and indeed at all the stations. The figure produced by the two lines may be described as presenting somewhat the form of a vase; and though at one station the vase may appear broader or narrower than at another, it is still easy to see that in essential outline they are identical. In this interesting fact we discover that the phenomena of terrestrial magnetism are subject to one general law.

A paper read before the Royal Society at the last meeting for the session, contains information likely to be useful to seamen. It embodies a report drawn up by Mr Evans for the Admiralty *On the Deviations of the Compass on Board of Iron-built Ships and Wood-built Ships in the Royal Navy*, and establishes certain principles and conclusions which go far to diminish the risk of navigation in ships built with metal. Many readers will remember that, some years ago, Mr Airy, the astronomer-royal, introduced a compensation magnet to neutralise the effect of the ship's magnetism on the compass; but this method having been found liable to danger, is now disused by the Admiralty. The system at present adopted is a standard-compass elevated on a short mast a sufficient height above the deck to be unaffected by the iron of the ship, with which the steering-compass is compared by often repeated observations. Vigilant attention to this comparison is one of the characteristics of a good captain: the necessity for vigilance will be understood by a few words of explanation. Iron is more or less magnetic; an iron ship is therefore magnetic, and the amount of magnetism varies with the direction in which she lies while building. If the head be to the north, the magnetism will not be the same as if the head had been placed to the south, and similarly for the other points. Whatever the amount of magnetism, it undergoes a change by the launch, and by the position in which the vessel is moored during the fitting, and by the putting in of her machinery: every addition to the iron-work, and every blow struck thereon, makes a difference. Setting the machinery in motion makes another change, the trial-trip another; in fact, not till after the ship has made sundry trips, and endured some knocking about, does the magnetism 'shake down,' as Mr Evans says, to anything like a permanent quantity. There is yet another vicissitude to be encountered when the vessel crosses the line, for with her entrance upon the southern hemisphere, a change in the magnetism begins and continues through the voyage, until it is entirely different from that which prevailed in the northern hemisphere.

We thus see that with such fluctuations, no reliance could be placed on a permanent compensation. The deviation of the compass of the *Great Eastern* changed full seven degrees in the voyage from the Thames to Weymouth; an amount of error more than sufficient to lead to wreck, and only to be guarded against by constant watchfulness and comparison with the standard.

Wood-built steamers, because of their machinery, are also liable to fluctuations of their magnetism, but not to such rapid ones as are iron vessels. The *Plumper* cruised about Vancouver's Island for sixteen months, before the deviation of her compass reached the amount prescribed by theory; and similar results have been noted on board the *Highflyer*, one of the ships now employed in China. The compass-observations made by Captain Shadwell in this latter vessel are mentioned as a valuable contribution to the science of navigation.

The result of the whole sum of observations hitherto

obtained is satisfactory; confidence is insured by the use of an elevated standard-compass, and it is found possible to reduce the liability to error by attention to certain rules. Iron ships should be built with their head to the north; while rigging, they should be moored with the head in the opposite direction, and the standard-compass should be placed as far from the stern as possible; but should the vessel have been built head to south, then the compass must be as near to the stern as possible. It is found, moreover, that the magnetism of the machinery is the very contrary to that of the vessel; hence they neutralise each other to some extent, and so decrease the error.

We have dwelt upon this subject because of its importance, and the desirability of making it known as widely as possible, at a time when every month sees a multiplication of iron ships, either in the royal navy or in the mercantile marine. The Report from which the foregoing particulars are gathered, will doubtless appear in the *Philosophical Transactions*, where it will be available for all who take interest in navigation. It gives us pleasure to mention in connection herewith, that a cheap serviceable barometer, approved by the Board of Trade, is now manufactured by Negretti for service at seaports and fishing-stations. Had this barometer been in use along the eastern coast prior to the gales of May and June, it is probable that many of the fishermen who then perished would now be living.

M. Pasteur, of Lille, has recently published a book *On Fermentation*, which throws new light on one of the unsettled problems of chemistry. He shews that the germ in which fermentation originates is a living substance—organic, not inorganic, as some suppose; and leads to the conclusion that there is a remarkable analogy between fermentation and physiological action. In fermentation with yeast, for example, there is a perpetual renewal of the yeast, and at the same time certain curious relations appear between vital phenomena and mineral substances. Introduce yeast globules into a mixture composed of candied sugar, ammoniacal salt, and a phosphate, and the ammonia will disappear by transformation into the complex albuminous matter of the yeast, while the phosphate gives itself up to form new globules. One of the elements of yeast is carbon, and this, in the present example, is derived from the sugar. M. Pasteur further explains and illustrates the process of lactic fermentation, which most chemists have considered as organic matter in course of alteration; but the lactic yeast is now shewn to be really an organised substance, composed of globules which are smaller than those of beer. In the fermentation of tartaric acid, a further discovery was made of a surprising nature: among substances known to opticians are right-handed and left-handed tartrate of ammonia, so named from the direction in which their solutions rotate rays of light. They have no effect on polarised light; but in the experiments here referred to, fermentation took place in the right-handed only, while the left-handed, similarly prepared, did not ferment, but underwent a change in which it was found to act with energy on polarised light. These experiments are of a refined character, and can only be properly appreciated by chemists; we cannot, however, pass them unnoticed in our record of scientific progress, if only for the reason that most of the practical applications used in the arts have originated in philosophical laboratory experiments.

Electricity, as a remedy for the silkworm disease, has been tried with success in the south of France. We have as yet no particulars of the mode of application, but we hear that a sericulturist subjected some of his worms to a gentle electric current, and got excellent cocoons from every one; while others, left to themselves, either died or gave no silk, or but a small quantity.

The statement, so often put forth of late years, that no perceptible difference could be detected between the air of a mountain-top and of a London alley, is no longer admissible, for refinement in the construction of chemical instruments enables experimentalists to discover differences which, though exceedingly small, do nevertheless exist, and become important when large masses of air are taken into account. Dr Frankland shews, in a recent communication to the Chemical Society, that there is not only a perceptible difference between the air of town and country, but between the air of different parts of the same town. The air near the sea contains more carbonic acid than that on land, and sea-air contains more carbonic acid and oxygen in the day-time than during the night; the explanation being, that dissolved air containing these two elements escapes from the warmed surface of the water. The scope of the experiments made to elucidate this question may be inferred from the fact, that the samples of air submitted to test were collected over an area from Paris to Madrid, from Berlin to Mexico, and at a height of 18,000 feet during a balloon ascent. Demonstration of this fact appears to involve the necessity of yet more attention to the subject of ventilation: if the open air of a town shews a diminution or deterioration of its oxygen, how much more is the air confined in houses, schools, barracks, and churches, liable to change for the worse. The complaints regarding boys at school, that they 'don't get on,' are often referable to the atmosphere of carbonic acid gas which the close-pent urchins are compelled to breathe.

Mr Pirogoff, the distinguished Russian surgeon—the Astley Cooper of St Petersburg—has recently made an extraordinary series of anatomical studies, the results of which, to be published in a collection of life-size plates with descriptive text, will doubtless be prized by anatomists. One of the difficulties that physiologists have had to contend with, is the displacement, more or less, after death, of the organs placed in the soft tissues, besides their alteration in other particulars. It occurred to Mr Pirogoff twenty years ago, that these might be avoided by exposing the bodies which he wished to dissect to the action of frost; and he placed them for three days in a temperature eight degrees below zero, such as frequently prevails during the Russian winter. The corpses thus treated acquire the consistence of wood; the interior organs, when exposed, retain their form and position, because the dilatation of the water which they contain counterbalances the contraction of nerve or muscle. The mode of operation was to cut the bodies into thin slices, or veneers, presenting three different aspects—transversal, longitudinal, and median—and with the organs in the exact position which they hold during life. Then, to transfer these to paper, the frozen surface of the several slices and sections is moistened with a sponge dipped in warm water; a thin coat of ice forms thereupon, a sheet of glass is laid upon that, and a sheet of transparent paper on the glass, and, by tracing on this, every line and figure is reproduced which the anatomist may desire. By operating in this way, Mr Pirogoff has obtained a magnificent series of plates, in four portions, comprehending sections of the head, of the neck and spinal marrow, of the breast and abdomen, and of the extremities. By another process which he calls sculptural anatomy, he lays open the cavities of the body, and has thereby settled the question as to whether certain portions of the interior contain air or solid matter, or whether the membranes closely envelop their respective organs.

In a little work on the prevention and treatment of deafness, published eight years ago by one of our first authorities on the subject, Mr William Harvey, the well-known aurist of Soho Square, it is remarked, that 'the fashion now so prevalent among the ladies in dressing the hair entirely conceals that beautiful

organ the ear, and it is to be feared that it will give rise, in many instances, to ear-disease.' This prediction is now fulfilled. The London aurists are full of business, arising from this 'absurd and unnatural fashion of bolstering up the hair with a large pillow of superficial matter, thereby preventing a free and indispensable current of the external atmosphere, and concealing that beautiful organ, which was designed to be one of nature's prettiest attractions.' It is time to make our fair countrywomen comprehend that air is as essential to hearing as to seeing; and that it is bad taste, as well as bad judgment, to cover up with bandages an organ 'so beautifully adapted,' as Mr Harvey writes, 'to collect and reflect the rays of sound, and conduce to the well-being of the race in various ways.'

The meeting of the British Association, which took place at Oxford in the beginning of the month, was behind that of the previous year in attendance and interest, but was marked by some animated discussions, and by some striking traits of an improved liberality of feeling towards science. There was an abundance of Arctic celebrities present—Sir Edward Belcher, Dr Rae, and Sir John Richardson, besides Mr Parker Snow, who proposes an expedition to recover the papers of the Franklin exploration: consequently polar matters occupied a considerable space. In the usually temperate region of the Statistical Section, a blind gentleman, named Fawcett, made an elaborate assault upon Dr Whewell, for some remarks of his condemnatory of the deductive method of political economy, and this in the lionine presence of the Master of Trinity himself, who made a vigorous reply. The Asiatic travellers, the brothers Schlaghtweit, gave in the Physical Section some valuable reports on their magnetic observations in India. The speculations of Darwin regarding the Origin of Species, and the arguments for the enlarged antiquity of man from the flint implements of the drift of Picardy and the bone-caves of England and Sicily, were very prominent in the Zoological and Geographical Sections. On the former subject, the Bishop of Oxford made an oratorical display, which led to a smart and somewhat silencing reply from Professor Huxley. Some objections from Professor Owen, too, underwent a sharp rebuke from the same hand. The audiences seemed much divided on both subjects. But the most remarkable demonstration of the week, was the sermon of Dr Temple, in St Mary's, on Sunday morning. Its breadth of view gave the highest satisfaction to the savans present, and a general wish was expressed that it should be published.

SEED-WORDS.

'Twas nothing—a mere idle word,
From careless lips that fell,
Forgot, perhaps, as soon as said,
And purposeless as well.

But yet, as on the passing wind
Is borne the little seed,
Which blooms unheeded, as a flower,
Or as a noisome weed—

So often will a single word,
Unknown, its end fulfil,
And bear, in seed, the flower and fruit
Of actions good or ill.

F. D.

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